

When the WBDC was founded in 1986, less than 10 percent of the businesses in the United States were owned and operated by women. Today, thanks in part to the leadership and encouragement provided by Hedy and Carol, there are over 8.6 million women-owned businesses throughout the country, generating over \$1.3 trillion in revenues this year and employing nearly 7.8 million people.

As a champion for women's economic development, the WBDC has worked to assist tens of thousands of women in entrepreneurial efforts nationwide. From business certifications to financial assistance workshops, the WBDC provides women business owners with the training they need to establish and expand their businesses. By providing women with essential resources to become successful business owners, the WBDC has empowered women and helped them achieve economic independence through entrepreneurship.

Since its founding in 1986, the WBDC has expanded in size and scope from a two-person operation seeking to address the lack of representation of women in the business sector, to a staff of 24 full-time employees and contractors that now influence policies on the federal, State and local levels. The achievements of Hedy and Carol are significant, and the positive role of the WBDC in supporting women's entrepreneurship is evident.

On behalf of the people of Illinois, I thank Hedy and Carol for their 27 dedicated years with the WBDC and congratulate them on their many contributions for women in the business sector. I wish both of them the best as they continue to inspire and provide leadership for women's entrepreneurship in the years to come.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION ANNIVERSARY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the 25th anniversary of the National Center for Biotechnology Information—NCBI—part of the National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health, America's world-renowned research institution in Bethesda, MD.

The late Senator Claude Pepper, for whom a major building on the NIH campus is named, authored six separate laws creating individual institutes at NIH. In 1987, while a Member of the House of Representatives and chairman of the Select Committee on Aging's Subcommittee on Health and Long-Term Care, Pepper introduced H.R. 393, the National Biotechnology Information Act, which established the NCBI. At a March 1987 hearing on H.R. 393, Pepper explained that "we are dealing with nothing less than the mystery of human life and the unfolding scroll of knowledge, seeking to penetrate that mystery, which is life itself." He noted that his bill was intended "to facilitate the development of advanced computer

and communication systems that will make it possible for the vast expanding knowledge of the gene to be assimilated into a computer system and made available for distribution to researchers and to people generally all over the World."

Soon thereafter, Congress embraced the importance of the biotechnology field, recognized the pressing need to harness the large volume of data emanating from the genetic revolution in science, and endorsed the establishment of NCBI to manage this valuable resource for the benefit of human health. With strong bipartisan support in Congress, Pepper's bill was enacted as part of Senator Ted Kennedy's comprehensive measure, the Health Omnibus Extension Programs of 1988, on November 4, 1988.

Today, biomedical research encompassing genomic and genetic knowledge is a major driver of medical progress. The foresight of Congress in establishing the NCBI, combined with the innovative leadership of Director Dr. David Lipman and the expertise of the agency's dedicated staff, has led to the emergence of an impressive national resource for molecular biology information. In June of this year, Dr. Lipman was honored by the White House with the "Open Science" Champions of Change Award for his work at NCBI. By organizing and integrating genomic data for developing diagnostic and clinical applications, the Center serves as a bridge from research to the medical community. Each day, more than 3 million users access NCBI's 40 interlinked genomic and bibliographic databases and download more than 30 terabytes of data.

I am proud that Congress has continued to support funding for the NCBI over the past 25 years. Recently, by requiring that the results of NIH-funded research be made public through the Center's PubMed Central Database, Congress has opened to everyone the full text of published journal articles that are essential to advancing scientific research and public health.

The biomedical research funded by the NIH provides knowledge essential to combat debilitating diseases, and continuing this research is dependent on the resources and tools that NCBI has developed so successfully for the benefit of the biomedical community. As NIH Director Francis Collins has noted, we are entering an era of precision medicine in which a patient's genetic makeup may determine the exact treatment that is provided. Surely, the NCBI databases and tools will be needed on the front lines of this new effort.

On the occasion of this 25th anniversary, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Lipman and the outstanding staff of NCBI, who through their skill and vision have built this unique biomedical resource.

TRIBUTE TO DR. CHARLES M. VEST

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, it is my great privilege to rise today to recognize the distinguished career of Dr. Charles M. Vest, a native West Virginian, on his retirement as president of the National Academy of Engineering, NAE. In his time at the NAE, Dr. Vest worked tirelessly to identify and address the most pressing and important challenges facing American engineering, including the declining interest in math and science among our Nation's students and the growing challenges of information flow among government, the private sector, and academia. As NAE president, Dr. Vest was instrumental in urging Congress to pass the America COMPETES Act, which provided a blueprint for investing in critically important scientific and technological pursuits. Dr. Vest also helped craft the Grand Challenges for Engineering, a global initiative that identifies the greatest challenges and opportunities facing engineers today. In this increasingly technology-based and globalized world, Dr. Vest recognized the need for a clear and strong national vision for our engineers and scientists. He provided the dynamic leadership that the NAE required to allow American engineers to compete and thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

A native of Morgantown, WV, Chuck displayed a clever and inquisitive mind from a young age. Growing up under the shadow of Sputnik, he developed a keen interest in electronics and he would constantly tinker with surplus World War II gadgets, such as microphones and resistors. This curiosity led him to West Virginia University where he received a degree in mechanical engineering. Chuck continued his education at the University of Michigan, earning a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering; he remained there for 22 years as a professor, a dean, and university provost.

Dr. Vest has since served as a director of DuPont and IBM. He has held positions on an array of Federal committees and commissions, including the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology and as vice chair of the U.S. Council on Competitiveness. Chuck has authored three books, received honorary doctoral degrees from 18 universities, and was awarded the 2006 National Medal of Technology and the 2011 Vannevar Bush Award.

Quite possibly, Dr. Vest's most important achievements occurred during his tenure as president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT. In his 14 years at the helm of MIT, Dr. Vest proved a worthy advocate of more robust communication and sharing within the science community. Under his extraordinary leadership, MIT launched its OpenCourseWare initiative and cofounded the Alliance for Global Sustainability. As he will readily attest, though, one of Dr. Vest's